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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 001322

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HELSINKI FOR SCHLAEFER/PISHKO - PLEASE PASS TO AMB WISNER  
DEPT FOR EUR DICARLO; EUR/SCE HOH, BALIAN, CARCANI

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UN](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#) [EU](#) [HR](#) [REGIONAL](#) [ISSUES](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIAN COMMITMENT TO KOSOVO OUTREACH DURING  
WISNER VISIT

REF: ZAGREB 1307

Classified By: Pol Off Tom Selinger for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: During his October 29-30 visit to Zagreb, Ambassador Wisner secured the GoC's commitment to actively assist in the region in promoting acceptance of Kosovo's future final status package. In meetings with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, Foreign Minister Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, presidential advisor Budimir Loncar, and MP Milorad Pupovac, Wisner outlined what final status might look like and stressed the importance of not delaying the outcome of the work of President Ahtisaari and the Contact Group. Croatian officials expressed enthusiasm at being called to play a leadership role in the region but were clearly calculating how best to do this, knowing they need to foster good relations with Belgrade or they won't wield enough influence to lead. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

PUPOVAC PROVIDING CRITICAL OUTREACH TO KOSOVO SERBS  
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12. (C) Ambassador Wisner praised the work of parliamentarian Milorad Pupovac, who reported his recent success in creating a committee to organize a Congress of Kosovo Serbs in December (reftel). While Pupovac said he found Kosovo Serb politics to be generally fragmented and confused, he was impressed by the quality of political leaders at the local level, saying he couldn't always find such leadership among Serbs in Croatia. He noted that his work so far has not been disrupted by Belgrade or anyone else.

13. (C) According to Pupovac, political power sharing between Serbs and Albanians will be the measure of a future constitutional framework. "We don't need an attempt at another ethnically pure state in this region," he warned, adding, "statehood is not a matter of mastery but an instrument of equality." While Pupovac was convinced Kosovo PM Agim Ceku understands this, he called on the international community to ensure that other Albanian figures were also aware.

14. (C) Ambassador Wisner stressed that Ahtisaari's proposal includes all of the minority protections Pupovac was calling for, from the community down to the individual. Pupovac acknowledged this, somewhat bewildered that the Serbs in Kosovo would reject the kind of guarantees that Serbs in Croatia continue to struggle for. Pupovac noted that he will speak in Belgrade November 13 at the Serb-American Center on "Serb Policy after 15 Years" and will include some comments about Kosovo. He agreed to provide Ambassador Wisner with a list of the key questions that Kosovo Serbs are asking about the final status package.

OPENING OFFICE IN PRISTINA, WEIGHING RECOGNITION OPTIONS  
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15. (C) PM Sanader noted that the GoC just decided a week prior to open a Croatian mission in Pristina. He pointed to Dr. Pupovac's OSCE-supported efforts to organize political structures (reftel) as the GoC's most useful contribution to the Serbian community in Kosovo, but was willing in the future to reassure Kosovo Serbs himself that there can be life after losing power. He also offered to speak to Kosovo PM Agim Ceku, a longtime associate of his, about how the GoC has approached the protection of Serb minority rights. Sanader stressed that Croatia wants to be a friend and advisor to both Serbia and Kosovo.

16. (C) FM Grabar-Kitarovic noted that, depending on the nature of an eventual UN Security Council resolution, recognition of an independent Kosovo may initially be tricky for Croatia, given bilateral concerns with Serbia. However the GoC is interested in pushing for a collective approach to recognition, according to the FM, giving Croatia the political cover of the consensus of a group of nations, such as the EU. Grabar-Kitarovic said the GoC would try to speed up resolution of some bilateral matters with Serbia, such as border negotiations, to minimize tensions leading up to Kosovo recognition. MFA staff also agreed to provide Ambassador Wisner with Croatian analysis of what Serbia might do to disrupt Kosovo's final status.

17. (C) Grabar-Kitarovic also warned of a mood for delay among some EU partners, such as the Greeks. When the FM noted that she would make an official visit to Moscow in the coming days, Ambassador Wisner asked her to stress to Russian

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leaders that this region needs stability and the Contact Group needs to stay together or it will stir up a generation of trouble here.

PRESIDENT'S ADVISOR CALLS FOR TIME FOR SERBIAN ELECTIONS  
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18. (C) President Stjepan Mesic will also step forward to promote acceptance of Kosovo's final status, according to his Special Advisor for International Relations Budimir Loncar. He stressed, however, that the international community should allow time for both presidential and parliamentary elections in Serbia before announcing the final status. Loncar said Serbian President Tadic told him that Serbian PM Kostunica is ready to accept both elections being held in December.

19. (C) Loncar also said it would be best if Kosovo's eventual UN membership were delayed until Serbia was solidly on the track to NATO membership. He predicted that once Serbia gets past losing Kosovo, it will turn hard toward the west.  
BRADTKE